

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated October 4, 2005 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 7, 10, 11, and 13 are hereby amended, and claims 8 and 9 are canceled. Accordingly, claims 1–7, 10–15, and 25–33 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 7–8 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,850,540 to Furuhashi et al. (hereinafter “Furuhashi”) taken with U.S. Patent No. 5,420,587 to Michel (hereinafter “Michel”); claims 9–13 and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim; and claims 1–6 and 25–33 are allowed.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 1–6 and 25–33 are allowed, and that claims 9–13 and 15 contain allowable subject matter.

In the Office Action, claims 7–8 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Furuhashi taken with Michel. By this amendment, Applicants amend independent claim 7 to incorporate claims 8 and 9. Claim 9 contains allowable subject matter, as indicated by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 7, and its dependent claim 14, are allowable over any combination of Furuhashi and Michel.

Applicants believe the foregoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

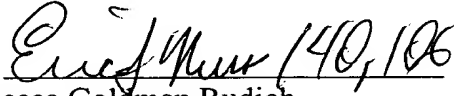
Application No.: 09/982,829
Response dated January 5, 2006
Reply to Final Office Action dated October 5, 2005

Docket No.: 8733.080.10-US

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: January 5, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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